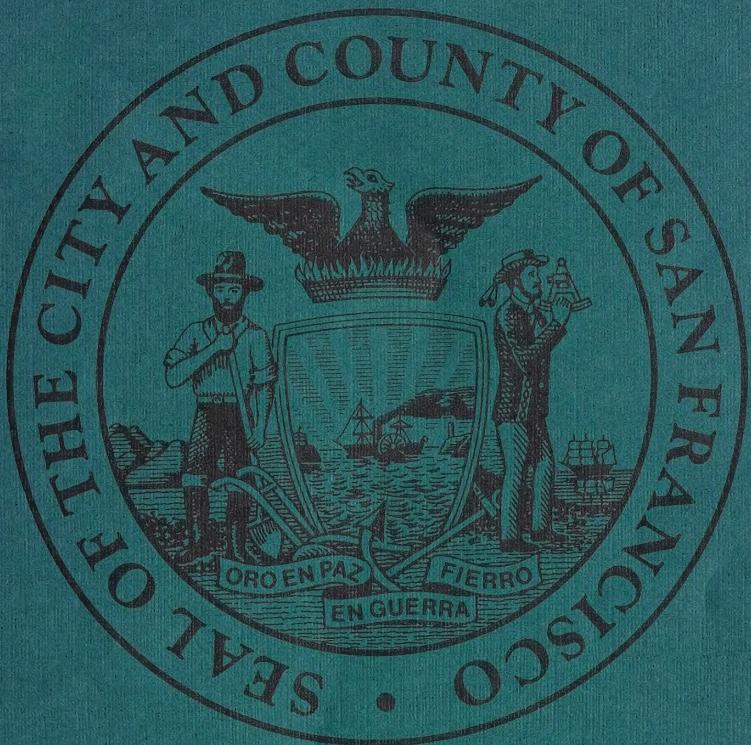


# FEEDING THE HUNGRY IN THE CITY OF ST. FRANCIS



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Mayor's Task Force on Food and Hunger  
1986 Report and Recommendations



F E E D I N G   T H E   H U N G R Y  
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C I T Y   O F   S T .   F R A N C I S



# FEEDING THE HUNGRY IN THE CITY OF ST. FRANCIS

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In this great country, so rich in resources that its farms produce huge crop surpluses every year, there is no good reason any American should go undernourished.

Currently America provides us enough food for everybody. Good food, in abundant supply.

Why then do so many Americans get less food than they need for healthy bodies? Why do thousands of children grow up with poor nutrition -- with not enough of the right foods to develop their physical and mental potential?

In this richest of all nations, why does hunger persist? And what can we do to prevent it?

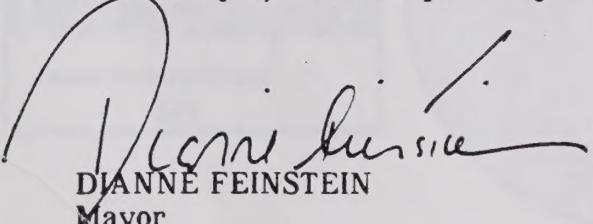
Two years ago, seeking answers to such questions, I appointed a Task Force on Food and Hunger. I asked the Task Force to determine the level of hunger in San Francisco and to seek solutions for the hunger that was found.

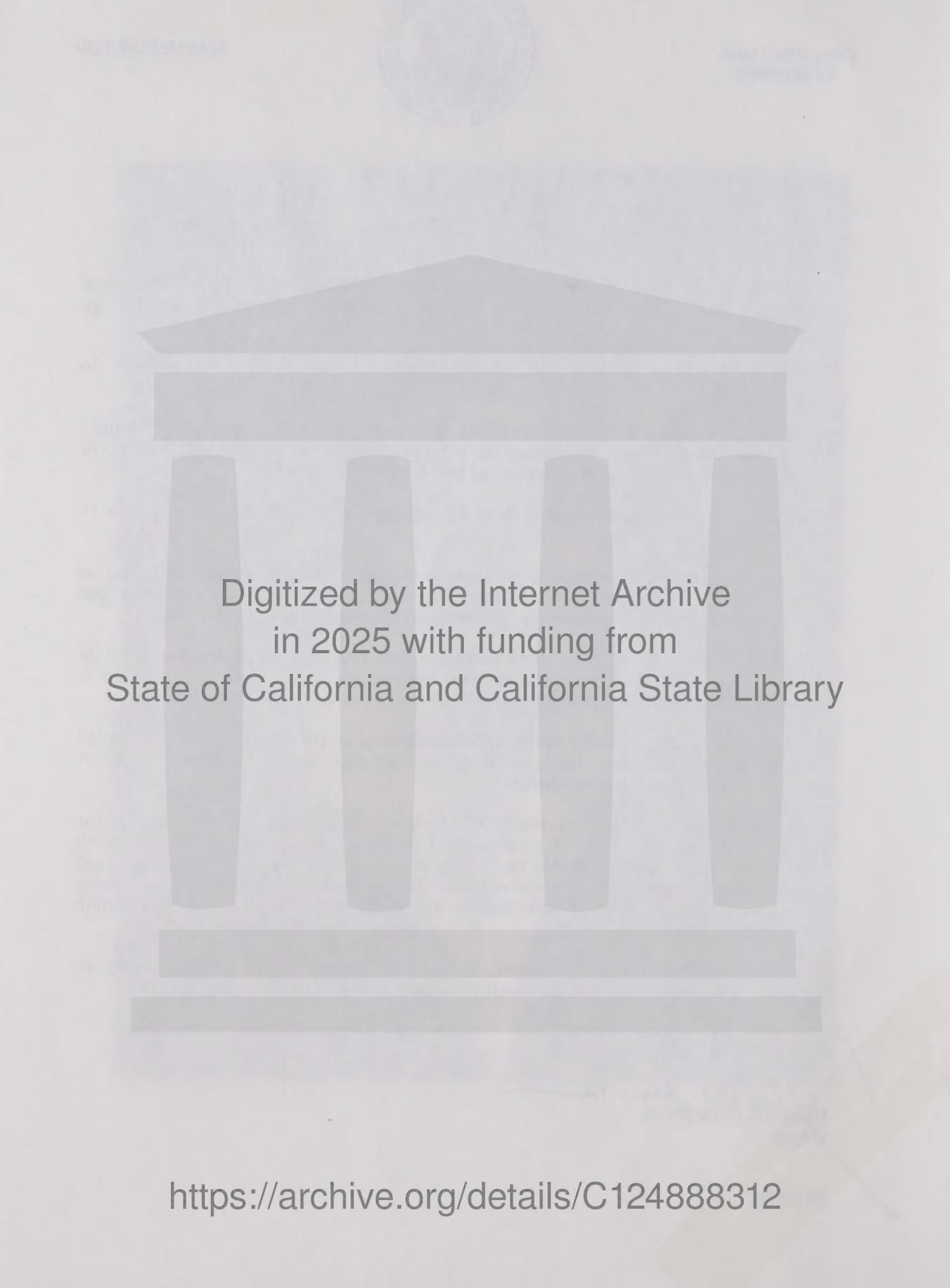
This is their report. It finds that although San Francisco is in the forefront of cities providing services to its low income community, 25 percent of its residents are at or near the poverty level -- and therefore at or near the hunger level.

The report finds no scarcity of food, but indicates an inability to get surplus food to needy San Franciscans. Inadequate monies are currently available to transport and store surplus food commodities.

I am proposing, as a part of the 86/87 budget, a \$100,000 fund to be used for storage and transportation of surplus food commodities. It makes no sense to have free surplus food available for needy people and have no way to get the food to the people. We will also implement task force recommendations for increasing food availability, improving distribution and warehousing, extending food stamp access and providing dental care.

I thank the Task Force's diligent, dedicated members. They have done an excellent job, and their plan may well provide a model for cities everywhere.

  
DIANNE FEINSTEIN  
Mayor



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# FEEDING THE HUNGRY IN THE CITY OF ST. FRANCIS

## INTRODUCTION

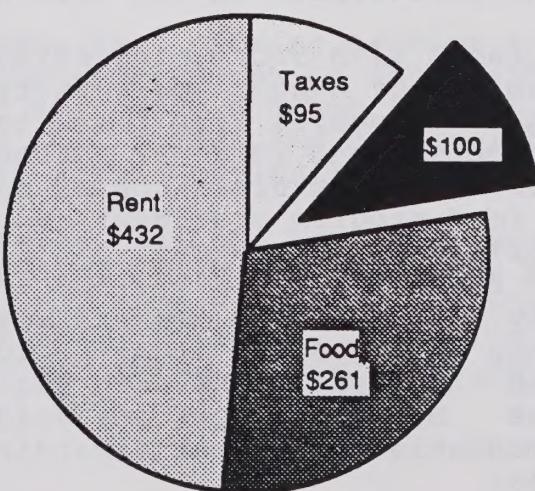
In California, where the land returns billions of dollars in agricultural produce each year, many find it increasingly difficult to feed themselves and their families. It is a problem that reaches beyond the homeless, stretching into hotel rooms occupied with elderly residents, classrooms filled with children, clinics helping pregnant women, young mothers, and infants, and homes of those recently unemployed.

For San Franciscans living in a city where the cost of living is 7% higher than the national average, meeting life's most basic necessities is often difficult. It is especially hard for those trying to make it on limited or fixed incomes, for whom covering one expense often means delaying another. Because food is generally a family's most flexible expense item, it frequently takes last place to other more urgent and fixed expenses.

### CAN POOR PEOPLE AFFORD TO LIVE IN SAN FRANCISCO?

**1985 Poverty Level: \$888 per month for family of four**

Average Contract Rent	\$432
Minimum Food	\$261
Taxes-Federal/State	\$95



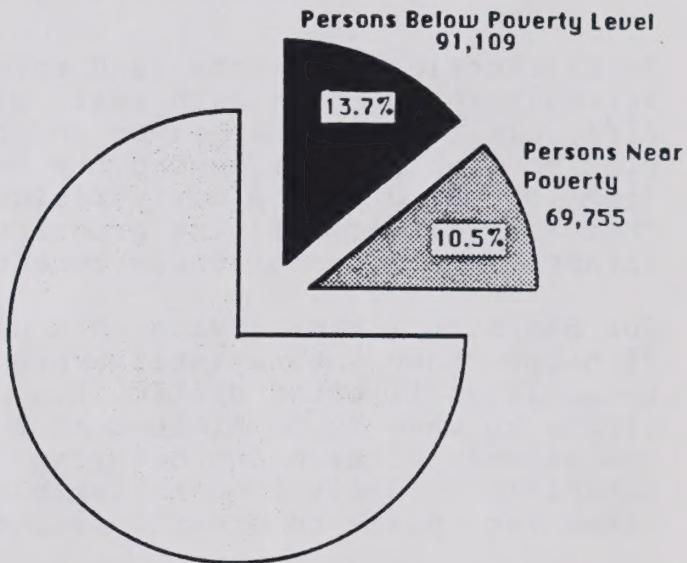
- Utilities?
- Transportation?
- Medical?
- Phone?
- Personal Care?
- Clothing?
- Entertainment?
- Emergencies?

\* See footnote on page 23

According to the 1980 Census, 91,109 people in San Francisco live below the poverty level, (\$10,178 for a family of four). Another 69,755 of our residents live so close to poverty (150% of the poverty level or \$15,267 for a family of four) that they are commonly referred to as the "near poor". The poor are predominantly older women with no financial or family support, young children whose parents lost jobs or suffered some other emergency, young adults working at low paying jobs, and single women whose husbands have left and pay no child support. *Because of their poverty, close to 25% of San Francisco's population live at RISK of hunger.*

## San Franciscans at Risk of Hunger

Total City Population	665,032	100.0%
Persons above poverty	504,168	75.8%
Persons near poverty	69,755	10.5%
Persons below poverty	91,109	13.7%
Total At Risk of Hunger	160,864	24.2%



SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS, 1980

The health consequences of inadequate nutrition are devastating, ranging from lethargy, anemia, and stunted growth, to infant mortality, osteoporosis, and increased vulnerability to infection. Hunger threatens to rob us of our most valuable resource -- a physically and mentally healthy population -- able to contribute and participate in the working of our community.

In March, 1984, faced with increasing evidence of the interrelated problems of hunger and poverty, Mayor Dianne Feinstein appointed a special Task Force to assess the level of hunger in San Francisco and identify potential solutions. Community leaders, health professionals, social service administrators, food program providers and advocates joined together to compile data on how well San Francisco was meeting the growing need for food within its low income and ethnically diverse community. Task Force members met with representatives of food assistance programs and organizations throughout the City, and studied the populations they served and the current levels of service. Based on their analysis, the Task Force developed recommendations aimed at expanding and improving existing services.

## SECTION I: SUMMARY OF TASK FORCE FINDINGS

San Francisco hosts many government programs designed to assist low-income individuals and families: Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC); Food Stamp Program (FSP); Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC); U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Commodities Program; and various special programs for seniors and children. Mixed local, state, and federal funding support these varied efforts. In addition, the City sponsors a General Assistance (GA) Program which provides cash assistance, in-kind shelter, food, and food stamps for indigent persons between 19 and 64 in need of short-term financial aid. Over half of those receiving such aid are considered unemployable because of temporary or permanent disability. San Francisco currently spends over \$20 million on General Assistance (GA), and \$7 million for its Homeless Emergency Services Program, which provides shelter and food in emergency situations. San Francisco also contributes in other ways to improve food access for those in need; for example, city revenue subsidizes warehouse space for the SF Food Bank, provides a \$50,000 matching grant for operation of the Emergency Food Box Program, and a percentage of the city parking tax is earmarked for senior programs.

The private and non-profit sectors -- churches, synagogues, neighborhood associations and volunteer networks likewise -- make invaluable and generous contributions to assist San Francisco's needy. Programs such as the San Francisco Food Bank, Emergency Food Box, neighborhood pantries, and hot meal sites throughout the city, try to fill the gap between government support and need.

Despite these efforts, the City faces a serious shortfall. Increasing numbers of San Franciscans do not receive needed food assistance. Services to the poor and hungry are simply unable to keep up with the demand.

The fact that hunger is a growing problem in San Francisco is consistent with the conclusions of other local and national studies. Indeed, more than a dozen reports released in the last two years confirm that hunger and malnutrition have reached crisis proportions across the nation.

Unlike underdeveloped nations, however, hunger in our City is not the result of food scarcity. All over America, farmers produce surplus, and grocery shelves are stocked with fresh, frozen and canned goods. *Rather, hunger is the result of poverty and other obstacles to available food.*

Since the mid-60's, the federal government has attempted to ameliorate the effects of poverty by investing in programs that assure adequate nutrition. In 1981, the Reagan administration, in spite of growing short and long term unemployment, reversed the federal stance and began slashing nutrition programs. Consequently, the numbers of the hungry have soared.

Many emergency food programs, unable to cope with increasing demand, are now forced to turn away the needy. Requests for emergency food assistance have doubled since the Task Force began its research. Delays and complicated application forms discourage many eligible people from participating in entitlement food programs. Finally, many food program recipients find that the benefits they receive fail to meet even their most basic nutritional needs. The recently enacted Gramm-Rudman-Hollings legislation, which devastates human services programs with mandated 50% cuts, promises to exacerbate an already desperate situation.

Access to employment opportunities, coupled with a national commitment to adequately funded food and income assistance programs, would go far towards alleviating the hunger crisis in San Francisco.

## SECTION II: FOOD PROGRAMS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this section, the Task Force presents an overview of food assistance programs in San Francisco. Along with a short description of each program, the Task Force identifies its major problems and the obstacles to participation. These are given as the basis, or rationale, for the recommendations that follow.

**FOOD STAMP PROGRAM:** Food coupons are issued by the federal government to eligible households at, or below, 130% of the poverty level, in order to increase their food purchasing power. The U.S. Department of Agriculture Thrifty Food Plan is the standard measure for determining the actual amount of food stamp benefits, based on household income. The average allotment is \$36 per month per person; the maximum, available to individuals with no other income, is \$79 per month. There are 41,000 people in San Francisco who currently receive food stamps.

**Rationale for Recommendations:** Since 1981, over 80 legislative changes in the Food Stamp Program have resulted in significant benefit reductions, and have reduced the number of eligible recipients. Onerous and complicated eligibility requirements weigh the system down, with the result that many low-income individuals get discouraged or are unaware of their eligibility. Local impact has been significant. The Task Force estimates that 8,000 eligible San Franciscans do not receive food stamps. Because the food stamp program does not serve the total eligible population, other local food providers must carry the burden. This is particularly true with respect to the food stamp program's inability to provide emergency benefits. Equally significant is the fact that food stamps rarely last the entire month, because the program does not keep up with actual food costs. According to a study issued in October, 1985, by the Food Research and Action Center, the Thrifty Food Plan's own recommended monthly dietary intake costs \$97-\$100 in San Francisco. For this, the Thrifty Food Plan allocates only \$67. In other words, an individual with no other income has only approximately 66% of his or her food costs covered by food stamps. It is not surprising that local emergency food providers are reporting marked increases in food demand toward the end of the month.

### **Recommendation For Food Stamps:**

1. Encourage Mayor Feinstein to work with the mayors of other cities, and food advocates around the country, to support or initiate federal legislation to raise food stamp coupon allotment, boost the number of eligible recipients, and increase allotment rates so that they correspond to actual food costs.

2. Support federal legislation to simplify and streamline regulations, so that eligible persons are encouraged to participate. (For example, the monthly reporting/retrospective budgeting and the mandatory work registration/job search requirements are administratively costly and burdensome with no evident benefit to clients.)
3. Deductions for excess shelter costs and dependent care are unrealistically low for cities with high cost of living and must be raised.
4. *Develop local food stamp outreach/assistance program (e.g., use the Advertising Council's new national media materials) to extend food stamp benefits to all eligible San Franciscans.*

#### USDA COMMODITIES PROGRAMS

For many years, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has made surplus commodities available to states. The states in turn help distribute the commodities to individuals and food assistance programs. The bulk of the commodities are cheese and butter (surplus resulting from the USDA's dairy price support program). Since December of 1981, more than 600 million pounds of dairy products have been distributed. To a lesser extent, the program offers other commodities, such as dry milk, cornmeal, flour, rice, and honey.

TEMPORARY EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (TEFAP) also known as SURPLUS COMMODITIES PROGRAM: The Economic Opportunity Council of San Francisco, Inc. (EOC), is the agency designated by the San Francisco County Board of Supervisors to administer and distribute surplus commodity foods supplied by the Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program of the United States Department of Agriculture. Commodities include cheese, butter, non-fat dry milk, cornmeal, flour, rice, and honey. In 1985, over \$3.5 million worth of food was distributed to low-income families on a county-wide basis each month. Approximately 62,000 households receive this food each month. The Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program helps by providing administrative funds to support distribution.

CHARITABLE INSTITUTION COMMODITIES FOOD PROGRAM also known as DONATED FOODS PROGRAM: The State Department of Education distributes a wide variety of surplus foods to congregate feeding sites. Twenty-five food items, packaged in institutional-sized servings are provided to public and private schools, and to institutions such as nursing homes, daycare centers, elderly feeding programs, prisons, and hospitals. The San Francisco Unified School District has a model program through a partnership with food processors, to convert surplus foods into more useful entrees such as burritos, and pizzas, and to serve them in school lunches.

### Rationale for Recommendations:

Under the commodities programs, U.S. Department of Agriculture pays the cost of transportation from federal storage to warehouses in the states. The states are responsible for arranging further distribution to local charitable organizations which, in turn, give it to needy people. The federal government currently provides funds for administrative overhead, but the present rate of 5% of the worth of the food is insufficient for counties such as San Francisco. Moreover, the 1987 Presidential Budget provides NO funds for administering the Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program!

Since the primary rationale of the Commodities Program is regulation of oversupply and price control of agricultural products, rather than nutritional factors, its offerings can be viewed only as supplemental to other food programs. Although the cheese and butter have been welcome resources for many, their high sodium and fat content are ill-advised for a population -- especially an aging population -- concerned about their health. The Task Force suggests that some effort be made to acquire a wider variety of food types than is currently available.

### Recommendations for U.S. Department of Agriculture Commodities Programs:

1. Increase San Francisco's allocation for overhead costs to meet the costs of administering, transporting and storing commodities in the Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program. One possibility is to reallocate surplus funds from counties with lesser needs to those with greater needs. At present, these surpluses are simply reabsorbed by the federal government.
2. Encourage the State Department of Education to follow the model of the San Francisco Unified School District and process a certain amount of their commodities into meals. These could be frozen and made available to low income San Franciscans.
3. Pursue changes in State regulations so that, in addition to congregate programs, a wider variety of commodities would be available to emergency food providers who serve individuals.

## CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS

Good nutrition for all children is an investment in the future, something akin to a national nutrition policy. Child nutrition programs help children in all stages of development: those in school, youngsters in daycare, infants, pregnant and postpartum women. Children and pregnant women are at periods of rapid growth in their life cycles and at great risk of long-term health problems due to inadequate nutrition. Dollars spent now on nutrition serve the double duty of assuring children a good start in life, and saving medical expenses for years to come.

NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH AND BREAKFAST PROGRAM: Schools receive financial reimbursement from federal and state governments for meals served to children in grade Kindergarten through twelfth grade. Low-income, eligible pupils receive meals at no, or low cost, while those from middle-income homes pay full price. Nutrition experts believe this program to be the single most important source of nutritionally balanced food for poor and "near-poor" school age children. In many cases it is their only balanced meal of the day. Locally, San Francisco's School Meals Program serves approximately 26,000 lunches and 12,000 breakfasts per day, at 115 feeding locations.

### Rationale for Recommendations:

During 1980-84 the federal government reduced reimbursement to schools, and introduced time-consuming eligibility procedures. As a result, there are fewer fully-subsidized meals being served. This is in spite of an increase in enrollment in the San Francisco Unified School District. Given the importance of school lunches to low and middle income children, the Task Force calls for action to reverse this alarming trend.

### Recommendations for School Lunch and Breakfast:

1. Support or initiate legislation to prevent further reductions in reimbursements to schools. Attempt to reverse this trend, paying special attention to the quality of meals.
2. Propose a pilot federal program for San Francisco -- to offer meals free to all students, and study its nutritional and administrative cost benefits.
3. Approach private sources for funds, particularly for equipment, to meet meal production requirements.
4. Support federal legislation to eliminate the Social Security account number collection requirement and the income verification process.

MAYOR'S OFFICE SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN: This program is an extension of the School Lunch Program, providing hot nutritious lunches during summer vacation to children 1-18 years old, and retarded adults enrolled in equivalent high school programs. The program is sponsored by a public agency such as a school district, Recreation and Park district, Housing Authority or Mayor's Office. Meals are served at sites located in churches, schools, community organizations, public housing, Recreation and Park centers. Eligibility is determined on a site by site basis where 50% or more of the children in the neighboring public schools qualify for free or reduced price meals as determined by family income and size. The feeding sites receive financial reimbursement from the federal government for meals served as well as using U.S. Department of Agriculture commodities. In 1985, 10,401 meals were served daily to children at 133 meal sites in San Francisco.

Rationale for Recommendations:

The 1985 figures are significantly lower than the 1981 figure of 17,917 at 167 sites. The Task Force identifies the following as major causes for the reduction in numbers served: (1) federal regulatory changes eliminating non-profit sponsors; (2) budget cuts reducing reimbursement rates; (3) new eligibility requirements.

Recommendations for Summer Food Program:

1. Pursue federal funding for increased reimbursements to cover additional meals, as well as prevent further reductions.
2. Reinstate non-profit sponsors.
3. Pursue federal funding to provide for additional meals in neighborhoods where resources are not available for meal sites.
4. Eliminate unnecessary eligibility requirements.

CHILD CARE FOOD PROGRAM Federal and State governments jointly reimburse child care centers and family daycare homes for providing nutritious meals and snacks to youngsters up to 12 years of age. In addition, the U.S. Department of Agriculture offers supplemental food commodities. The program assists needy families through reimbursements for meals served to children, which partially underwrites the cost of the child care. In San Francisco, 192 centers and 221 homes receive assistance for up to two meals and one snack per day. Over 74% of the children served are from low income families.

Rationale for Recommendations:

Federal reductions and regulatory changes are diminishing the scope of this program, resulting in fewer subsidized meals. Complex record keeping requirements discourage eligible child care providers from participating.

Recommendations for Child Care Food Program:

1. Support or initiate legislation to increase federal and state reimbursements to restore two meals and two snacks per day.
2. Initiate federal and state legislation to streamline record keeping and reduce paperwork for child care food program providers.
3. Apply for private funding to support a county-wide outreach program to draw licensed family daycare homes into the existing food program.

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENTAL FOOD PROGRAM FOR WOMEN, INFANTS, AND CHILDREN (WIC): The target population for WIC is pregnant women, new mothers, infants, and children up to five years, from families whose income falls below 185% of the poverty level, and who are at special risk in terms of their physical and mental health due to a medical condition or inadequate nutrition. The program provides federally funded health counselling, nutrition education, and supplemental food vouchers redeemable for specific foods at participating grocers. The San Francisco WIC Program serves approximately 8,000 women and children through four district health centers, San Francisco General Hospital, and St. Luke's Hospital.

COMMODITY SUPPLEMENTAL FOOD PROGRAM (CSFP): The target population for Commodity Supplemental Food Program is low income pregnant, postpartum and breastfeeding women, infants, and children under six years of age who are vulnerable to malnutrition. The Commodity Supplemental Food Program offers a variety of nutritious foods, including infant formula, evaporated milk, non-fat dry milk, egg mix, meat, peanut butter, cereal, rice, cheese, raisins, and a variety of fruits, fruit juices, and vegetables, free of charge to eligible individuals. These foods are supplied by U.S. Department of Agriculture and are intended as dietary supplements. San Francisco has the only program of this kind in the Western Region of U.S. Department of Agriculture, serving 6,500 individuals per month. It is widely regarded as a highly successful program, bringing \$3.4 million in free food to the county each year. According to the 1980 Census figures, there are 49,409 elderly San Franciscans who would be eligible for a similar program serving seniors.

## Rationale for Recommendations

San Francisco is fortunate, as it is one of few counties in the country to have two food programs for pregnant women, breastfeeding and postpartum mothers, infants and young children -- one is the WIC Program and the other is the Commodity Supplemental Food Program. The WIC Program serves approximately 7,000 individuals per month and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program serves approximately 6,500 per month. However, their combined efforts reach less than 33% of the eligible population.

The WIC program was designed to prevent nutrition-related health problems during critical times of growth and development, and to serve as an adjunct to good health care. It is widely regarded as one of the most successful of all federal programs and has been linked in numerous health studies to reduction in the incidence of low birth weight, which is one of the leading causes of infant mortality. Many eligible San Franciscans have been unable to experience the full extent of these benefits, as the WIC program is insufficiently funded and able to serve only 23% of those potentially eligible in San Francisco. This is 12% below the national average.

## Recommendations for WIC and Commodity Supplemental Food Program:

1. Pursue state legislation to supplement the WIC Program so that its current service level of 23% can be increased to at least 35%, the nationwide average.
2. Assure funding levels for both WIC and Commodity Supplemental Food Program to allow maximum participation of pre-school children.
3. Raise state and local funding to support a program that would monitor, and compile data on the nutritional status of low income pre-school children. This could be an inexpensive project and could perhaps be done through San Francisco's District Health Center Immunization Program, or Well-Baby Clinics.
4. Based on the success of the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, encourage federal legislation to expand the Elderly Commodity Supplemental Food Program into San Francisco. It is now operating as a pilot project in three states. According to 1983 census figures, 49,409 elderly San Franciscans would be eligible for such a program.

## SENIOR NUTRITION PROGRAMS

In 1972, as an amendment to the Older Americans Act of 1965, Congress established the Congregate Meals Program and the Home Delivered Meals Program. All persons of age 60 or over, regardless of their income levels, are eligible to receive meals through these programs. Although meals are served without charge, voluntary contributions are accepted.

CONGREGATE MEALS AT SENIOR CENTERS: San Francisco's Congregate Nutrition Program assists older people, especially the needy, with nutritionally sound meals, and other nutrition-oriented services such as nutrition education. These services are provided in group settings at senior centers. In addition to promoting health through improved nutrition, the program helps reduce the isolation of old age and provides a much needed link to other social and rehabilitative services. Locally the S.F. Commission on Aging, under Title III of the Older American Act, coordinates 15 San Francisco agencies that currently serve 23,746 senior citizens. Approximately 1.2 million meals are served annually at 59 senior center sites throughout the city. Ethnic meals are available that cater to a variety of tastes: black, kosher, Native American, Filipino, Chinese, Japanese, Hispanic, and Russian. A few locations cater to special diets; for example, diabetic, low-sodium, chopped, or soft. Most senior center congregate meals are served at noontime; only one agency serves breakfast.

SENIOR HOME DELIVERED MEALS: For persons 60 or over, who are unable to reach congregate meal sites (either because of illness, an incapacitating disability, or isolation due to transportation problems), there is the Senior Home Delivered Meals Program. This program provides nutritionally balanced meals and other related social services. Its goal is to : (1) help maintain or improve the health of the elderly, and (2) preserve their independence, including prevention of premature or unnecessary institutionalization. From July 1, 1985, to the end of January, 1986, 2,488 elderly people received home-delivered meals. During fiscal year 1985-86 the total number of meals they expect to deliver will be nearly 500,000. Over 50% of the Meals on Wheels recipients of home delivered meals are below the poverty level. Some 75% live alone, 50% are handicapped, and 75% are over the age of 75.

CONGREGATE MEALS AT SENIOR RESIDENCES: In San Francisco there are 46 private apartment buildings and 47 private residential hotels that rent particularly to seniors and disabled adults with moderate to low incomes. Twelve of the apartment buildings and six of the hotels offer meals to their residents in congregate settings. The meals here are less costly than at commercial restaurants, and especially important for disabled residents for whom mobility is a problem. These meal programs are funded primarily by private sources. Unlike congregate meals in senior centers, congregate meal programs in senior residences are not eligible for Older Americans Act funds because the meals are not open to the general public.

Rationale for Recommendations:

Despite large numbers of seniors who are benefiting from Senior Nutrition Programs, figures indicate that many elderly people are not adequately served. A study of Tenderloin residents, by U.C. Berkeley School of Public Health students, indicates that the diets of 80% of the seniors interviewed are nutritionally deficient.

Because of the premature release from hospitalization of many seniors, due to the new "diagnostic related group" policy of Medicare, the demand for home delivered meals will remain high, and continue to exceed available resources.

The population of elderly San Franciscans living independently, especially in the over-75 range, has grown substantially. It is mainly those in the lowest income brackets who live in senior residences. Most residences have no food preparation facilities or congregate dining space. Because federal funding is no longer available to develop dining facilities, there has been no increase in facilities to match increasing numbers of needy residents. Even in residences where congregate dining is offered, many of the low-income residents are unable to afford their meals. Presently a pilot project is being developed with the Commission on Aging and the California Department on Aging to extend the Home Delivered Meal Program to hotel-bound seniors who will eat their meals together. Studies have shown that besides the obvious nutritional benefits of the meals, there is the important benefit of the social nature of congregate dining.

Recommendations for Senior Nutrition:

For Senior Programs to continue to operate, it is necessary to upgrade and expand existing facilities, equipment, and staff. The recommendations listed below are shortened versions of a comprehensive assessment of needs and solutions.

1. Pursue public and private funding to subsidize and expand the home delivered meal program, to shorten time on waiting lists, and to extend service to hotel-bound elderly eating together.
2. At federal, state, and local levels, initiate changes in laws and regulations to allow home delivered meal service to persons under 60 who are disabled; e.g. blind, handicapped, AIDS, and accident victims.
3. *Ask the Commission on Aging to convene appropriate city agencies, Unified School District, senior nutrition providers, and the private sector (church, business, community) to identify neighborhood resources necessary to provide meals to low-income, frail and isolated seniors, particularly those of ethnic minorities living in underserved neighborhoods of the City.*

## EMERGENCY FOOD PROGRAMS

Emergency food programs are the last line of defense for individuals and families without adequate resources. Emergency food programs include soup kitchens, shelters, and emergency pantries that have opened in response to gaps in public services. They provide food to individuals and families when they have no other resources. The original intent of emergency assistance programs was to serve people in times of crisis, to tide them over into independence, or to a more permanent form of assistance such as food stamps.

In San Francisco emergency food services are run by private, non-profit organizations such as social service agencies, neighborhood associations, and religious organizations. They take a variety of forms, but in every case they are experiencing a steady increase in the number of people seeking assistance. It is here that we find the most serious holes in the "safety net." Private food assistance programs are hard put to provide the basic survival needs of growing numbers of San Franciscans who need them.

THE SAN FRANCISCO FOOD BANK: The San Francisco Food Bank, like other food banks across the nation, rescues edible food that would otherwise be wasted. They sort and distribute this food to over 100 non-profit food programs such as soup kitchens and pantries, senior and childcare programs, and residential treatment and community centers. In 1985 the Food Bank saved the food service community of San Francisco over two and one-half million dollars in food costs. The food is gleaned from overstocked surplus, damaged, or near-expiration date food that would otherwise be discarded by food manufacturers and grocers. The Food Bank sorts and reboxes the food, and distributes it to its members at 12¢ per pound. This nominal fee assists in covering expenses involved in soliciting, warehousing, sorting and trucking.

The Food Bank, which was founded in 1980 by the San Francisco Council of Churches, is housed in a city-subsidized central warehouse belonging to the San Francisco Port Authority. In addition to service provided to the city's food assistance programs, the Food Bank has a Brown Bag Program that provides weekly grocery bags to 1400 needy seniors. In 1982-83 the total food distributed by the Food Bank amounted to about 20,000 pounds per month. In 1985-86 the figure reached 200,000 pounds per month!

HOT MEAL PROGRAMS (Soup Kitchens): There are more than a dozen locations in San Francisco where hungry people may receive a free hot meal. The Task Force estimates that in 1984, over 200,000 hot meals were served per month in the City. Some agencies serve only hot soup and sandwiches, and few outlets offer any kind of meal service at night or on weekends. For persons living in temporary shelters with no cooking facilities, a hot meal program may provide their only meal for the day.

GROCERIES AND VOUCHERS: Churches, synagogues and community centers distribute grocery supplies to needy individuals and families through food pantries. As pantries have sprung up to meet requests, the need has arisen to coordinate them into neighborhood networks. In addition, the Salvation Army, St. Vincent de Paul, Central City Hospitality House, Catholic Social Services, and the Jewish Family and Children's Service, all offer vouchers. Some vouchers are for purchasing food at grocery stores; others are for meals at restaurants. This assistance relies heavily on donated foods and money.

The Emergency Food Box Program is one of the largest organizations, collecting donated foods from the community, then packing and distributing it through social service agencies. In 1984, of the 17,154 individuals who received food boxes, 85% were women and children. The Emergency Food Box Program also spends more than \$4,000 per month on basic foods to ensure that the food boxes it distributes are nutritionally balanced. Federal Emergency Management Assistance (FEMA) monies have been used to supplement the food resources of many of these agencies.

HOMELESS EMERGENCY SERVICES: Emergency shelters are supported by the City of San Francisco, by the State of California, the Federal Emergency Management Assistance program (FEMA), and private non-profit organizations. San Francisco's county allocation from the Federal Emergency Management Assistance Program now totals over one million dollars. The San Francisco County allocation from the California Department of Housing and Community Development used for the San Francisco Emergency Shelter Program totals \$439,607 as of May 1986.

The city currently contracts with four shelters: The Episcopal Sanctuary, the Salvation Army, St. Vincent de Paul Society, and Central City Hospitality House. Except for the shelter maintained by the Episcopal Sanctuary, which offers both food and shelter, nutritional assistance at emergency shelters is limited. In addition, the City places families in hotel rooms until public housing becomes available.

### Rationale for Recommendations:

Emergency food providers are experiencing a tremendous strain on their resources as they rush to fill the gap left by reduced and eligibility-limited federal food programs. A number of factors account for this. There is a dramatic increase in the numbers of new poor, because of severe cutbacks in many assistance programs. Often, needy individuals are either no longer eligible for other forms of assistance, or find that the assistance programs they are enrolled in no longer meet their food needs. Emergency food providers are relied on more and more to serve the daily sustenance needs of the urban poor. As donated foods are unpredictable and often not nutritionally balanced, food providers must use their limited resources to purchase supplemental basic foods. Federal Emergency Management Assistance grants have been the primary resource for these emergency services, and providers are hard pressed to generate additional resources. Much could be saved if emergency providers pooled their buying power, and shared warehouse space and equipment.

With fewer government funded food programs, private organizations have had to fill in the gaps. The result has been many specialized programs with no formal coordination. Time and energy pressures make real coordination irregular, and the additional strain of competition for funding causes breakdowns which often result in reduced service to the population in need of emergency food.

### Recommendations for Emergency Foods:

1. Ask the City to assist in the acquisition of warehouse space large enough to house the San Francisco Food Bank, the Emergency Food Box, the Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program, the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, and a Self-Help and Resource Exchange Program; and to serve as a one-stop Community Food Resource Center for bulk-buying, storage, and distribution of foods to food programs citywide.
2. Raise private and public funds to expand hot meal services to weekends/holidays/nights, and to serve a greater number of geographic areas, perhaps using a mobile canteen.
3. Work with federal legislators to keep the Federal Emergency Management and Assistance Program (FEMA) funded, with increases to meet the growing need for emergency food supplies and insure full services year-round with a realistic allocation for administrative costs. Perhaps California could adopt a state program modeled after the Federal Emergency Management and Assistance Program.

## ALTERNATIVE FOOD SOURCES

In San Francisco there are a number of creative low-cost alternatives for improving one's access to nutritious, low-priced food. These self-help projects provide opportunities for low income individuals to save money on food costs.

FARMERS MARKETS: The City of San Francisco has two Certified Farmers Markets (Alemany at 100 Alemany Boulevard, and Heart of the City at United Nations Plaza on Market at 7th Street) where farmers bring fresh produce to sell directly to the public. These markets are a boon to the inner-city poor, offering high quality, nutritional fresh foods at substantially lower prices than most grocery stores - up to 35% less. Residents in the inner-city often have no choice, but to pay high prices for produce at small neighborhood food stores that can't offer the price savings that big supermarkets can. By eliminating the middlemen, farmers can offer their fresh produce at much fairer prices to appreciative city-dwellers.

URBAN GARDENS: Urban gardening is considered an essential component of any plan directed at improving access to fresh food. Increasing citizen self-reliance gets at the root of the hunger problem without increasing dependency on welfare. According to the San Francisco League of Urban Gardeners (SLUG), a skilled city gardener can harvest over one pound of produce per square foot. They estimate that backyard gardens and private plots in urban community gardens can save gardeners an average of \$400/year in food purchases.

Today San Francisco has 42 urban community gardens, with two new ones underway. In addition there are six schoolyard gardens, and seven more being set up. More than 2,000 gardeners are currently producing vegetables on urban land in San Francisco. San Francisco League of Urban Gardeners provides assistance to these gardens, working to promote innovative use of land, combining active recreation, education, food production, and beautification. Theoretically San Francisco's 7,000 vacant lots, if cultivated, could produce ten million pounds of food. This acreage does not include backyards.

COOPERATIVE BUYING/BULK BUYING: By pooling resources and buying power, cooperative food buying offers participants considerable savings. Supplies are generally purchased at wholesale prices in case lots, and participants volunteer their labor to break it down into individual orders. Food-buying clubs usually do best when the members have a common social basis, such as parents at a nursery school, members of a church, or seniors in a hotel. A number of senior residences in San Francisco have operated "mini-markets" once a week, where fresh produce, eggs, and other staples were sold in the lobby of their hotels. Through their own efforts and organization, many seniors are saving themselves money.

In a number of cities around the country, a larger version of this concept has been developed called SHARE (Self Help and Resource Exchange) where any individual can purchase a share at the beginning of the month for \$12, and towards the end of the month receive a bag of groceries worth approximately \$40. The increase comes as a result of pooled buying power, plus each participant in SHARE gives two hours of community service time to help operate the program. Once such a program is underway, it becomes self-sustaining and does not have to rely on outside grants.

Agencies that have food services can also save money by joining together in their food purchases. Transportation and storage limitations can be overcome by working together. Last year over 100 of the members of the San Francisco Food Bank participated in a pilot project in bulk purchasing. By working together and combining their purchasing power these agencies were able to stretch their program dollars.

VENDING MACHINES: An innovative approach to meeting food needs is to install vending machines with low-cost, nutritious food choices in the lobbies of residential hotels that do not have food preparation facilities. One local senior agency has installed vending machines in three hotels for low-income seniors and disabled in the Tenderloin. A group of seniors have formed a catering service that supplies the healthy food in the vending machines, reinforcing the conviction that seniors working together have the ability to meet many of their own basic survival needs.

Recommendations for Alternative Food Access:

1. Urge the city to survey unused public lands for potential garden use, and arrange long-term leases with non-profit groups like San Francisco League of Urban Gardeners on those identified lands.
2. Assist in gaining access to non-city land for community gardens in high-need areas.
3. Ask all city agencies to cooperate with neighborhoods and non-profits in establishing and maintaining gardens.
4. *Encourage development of a self-help food assistance program for families and seniors to augment their monthly food supplies. This can be done through the contribution of a small fee and community service time by the participant early in the month in exchange for groceries later in the month (Share concept). This could also be housed in the Community Food Resource Center.*

5. *Support the efforts of agencies serving inner-city residents to develop onsite food facilities in inner-city hotels and shelters for the homeless, such as congregate space for hot meals, community kitchens, vending machines, mini markets, and in-room facilities (refrigeration, storage and safe hot plates).*

#### NUTRITION EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY

Nutrition education and advocacy are an integral part of successful food programs and services. At present San Francisco supports no coordinated effort to disseminate information on nutrition. Education is a two-way process. It is vital for providers to be in touch with the needs of the population they serve, and know whether the service being offered is adequately meeting these needs. In addition it is important to maintain public awareness about nutrition-related issues, if only to combat confusing information coming through media and advertising.

Nearly half of the local food programs surveyed by the Task Force do not have ready access to nutrition education programs, or personnel trained in nutrition. At all levels, nutrition education is lacking in San Francisco. Children are not taught enough about nutrition and physical fitness in our schools, which impedes them in making knowledgeable health decisions later in life. Needy adults don't know where to get appropriate nutrition-related assistance. Health providers need more information about the nutritional status of the city's population, especially certain ethnic groups that have never been studied in depth.

Much could be remedied by offering workshops and technical assistance to public and private non-profit agencies and individuals working in food programs, providing training for teachers in nutrition and consumer issues, and in funding more Registered Dietitians and Nutrition Aides to give demonstrations and make information widely available. Strategies should be explored to provide this service.

Adequate dental health is an essential prerequisite for good nutrition. Fluoridation of San Francisco water has gone a long way towards assuring a high level of dental health for many residents. However new residents, and seniors who have not benefited from this program, are still vulnerable to dental problems and consequently often suffer from poor nutrition.

Recommendations for Nutrition Education and Advocacy:

1. Support allocation of funding to establish nutrition education components for both providers and recipients in all federal, state, and locally-funded food programs.
2. Support legislation at the local, state and federal levels to establish ongoing nutrition assessment of San Francisco's population, especially high-risk groups. This information would serve as a basis for nutrition services, programs and education.
3. *Improve the quality, availability, and affordability of dental services for low-income people in cooperation with San Francisco's Department of Public Health and local dental schools and private dentists.*

## SECTION III: FUTURE OF THE TASK FORCE

### CONFERENCE

San Francisco has always been in the forefront of cities providing services to its low income community. Despite these efforts, the City has been unable to meet the dramatic increase in the need for food assistance. While the situation is bleak, and long term solutions are more properly within the realm of national decision makers, there are local approaches which can go far towards alleviating the problem of hunger in our community.

To address San Francisco's hunger crisis, the Task Force calls upon Mayor Feinstein to convene a day-long Conference (October, 1986), aimed at preparing a blueprint for solving this crisis. Conference participants will include a broad spectrum of the San Francisco community -- from corporate executives to food program providers, members of the Board of Supervisors, state and federal legislators, leaders of organized labor, members of the corporate and family foundation community, religious organizations and other significant community leaders. This day-long event will educate participants, prepare a plan of action and develop potential funding sources.

Conference participants will focus on the following six Task Force recommendations selected because they lend themselves to local action:

1. *Develop local food stamp outreach/assistance program (e.g., use the Advertising Council's new national media materials) to extend food stamp benefits to all eligible San Franciscans.*
2. *Ask the Commission on Aging to convene appropriate city agencies, Unified School District, senior nutrition providers, and the private sector (church, business, community) to identify neighborhood resources, necessary to provide meals to low-income, frail and isolated seniors, particularly those of ethnic minorities living in underserved neighborhoods of the City.*
3. *Ask the City to assist in the acquisition of warehouse space large enough to house the San Francisco Food Bank, the Emergency Food Box, Temporary Emergency Food Assistance program, Commodity Supplemental Food program, Self-Help and Resource Exchange program, and to serve as a one-stop community food resource center for bulk-buying, storage and distribution of foods to city food programs.*

4. Encourage development of a self-help food assistance program for families and seniors to augment their monthly food supplies. This can be done through the contribution of a small fee and community service time by the participant early in the month in exchange for groceries later in the month.
5. Support the efforts of agencies serving inner-city residents to develop onsite food facilities in inner-city hotels and shelters for the homeless, such as congregate space for hot meals, community kitchens, vending machines, mini markets, and in-room facilities (refrigeration, storage and safe hot plates).
6. Improve the quality, availability, and affordability of dental services for low-income people in cooperation with San Francisco's Department of Public Health, local dental schools and private dentists.

Prior to the date of the Conference, the Task Force will organize six working groups to analyze and develop plans for each recommendation. These groups will be selected based on their expertise and interest in a particular recommendation's arena of concern. Each working group will then identify critical issues relative to the recommendation, including available resources and applicable laws, regulations and procedures that bear on the actual implementation of that recommendation. Each group will present their findings at the Conference where they will be discussed and clarified. The Conference goal will be to develop a comprehensive and final plan for implementation of each of the six recommendations.

#### CONTINUATION OF THE TASK FORCE

In light of the findings and recommendations of the Mayor's Task Force on Food and Hunger, it is critical that the Task Force continue as a working group. With regular input from the Task Force, the Mayor's staff will have direct information on the levels of hunger in San Francisco and the impact of proposed legislation.

#### Footnote to chart on page 1

Average contract rent figure comes from Association of Bay Area Governments, The City and County of San Francisco Social Area Analysis, July 1984, p. 11: mean contract rent of \$279 (based on 1980 census) times 55% increase to 1985 (US Department of Labor CPI) equals \$432.00. The Bay Area Council's Bay Area Housing Study for 1985 reported that a two-bedroom apartment median rental in San Francisco was \$850.00

The Food allocation is based on an average food stamp allotment for a family of four in 1984.



## TASK FORCE ON FOOD AND HUNGER

Jan Hartsough, Task Force Chair  
Producer Consumer Project Coordinator  
American Friends Service Committee  
2160 Lake Street  
San Francisco, California 94121  
752-7766

Laura Jane Asselin  
United Way  
2464 Vallejo Street  
San Francisco, California 94123  
921-2838

Lois Borgmann, R.D.  
Task Force Secretary  
Dept. of Public Health Nutritionist  
101 Grove Street, Room 117  
San Francisco, California 94102  
558-2920

Betty L. Brooks, Program Manager  
Nutrition Services Department  
Economic Opportunity Council  
70 Tenth Street  
San Francisco, California 94103  
863-2121

Anni Chung, Executive Director  
Helen Yuen  
Self-Help for the Elderly  
640 Pine Street  
San Francisco, California 94108  
982-9171

Joseph W. Crafton  
Executive Director  
Audrey L. Smith Child Dev. Center  
1050 McAllister Street  
San Francisco, California 94115  
346-3268

Stephen Graham, Executive Director  
Services for Seniors  
1500 Laguna Street  
San Francisco, California 94115  
922-5438

Anne Harrington  
Nicki Botto  
Salvation Army Social Services  
445 Ninth Street  
San Francisco, California 94103  
861-0755

Rev. Frederick Hubbard, Director  
Western Addition Senior Center  
1390 1/2 Turk Street  
San Francisco, California 94115  
921-7030

David Ishida, Program Analyst  
Commission on Aging  
25 Van Ness Avenue  
San Francisco, California 94102  
864-6051

Dorrwin B. Jones, Executive Director  
Meals on Wheels of San Francisco, Inc.  
1290 Sutter Street, Suite 9  
San Francisco, California 94109  
474-4646

Zoraina James, M.S.W., M.P.H.  
Program Manager, Mayor Feinstein's Office  
City Hall, Room 200  
San Francisco, California 94102  
554-6131

**Nylda Gemple**

Laura Brainan-Rodriguez (821-0123)  
SF Women, Infant & Children Program  
101 Grove Street, Room 117  
San Francisco, California 94102  
558-5311

**Kevin Kennedy**

Jay Borell  
Stephen D. Whitney-Wise  
St. Anthony's Foundation  
121 Golden Gate Avenue  
San Francisco, California 94102  
552-3838

**Eugenia Lau, RD**

Richard Farrar, Director  
SFUSD School Food Services  
125 Excelsior Avenue  
San Francisco, California 94112  
469-0530

**Bonnie MacGregor, M. Phil**

Director, San Francisco Food Bank  
333 Illinois Street  
San Francisco, California 94107  
957-1076

**Marion Standish, Executive Director**

Calif. Rural Legal Assist. Found.  
2111 Mission Street, Suite 401  
San Francisco, California 94110  
863-3520

**Pat Rogan**

Tom Debrauske  
Summer Food Program for Children  
Mayor's Office, City Hall  
San Francisco, California 94102  
558-5951

**Rod Umino, Assistant Director**

Margaret Furnish, Assistant Director  
Food Stamps Program  
P. O. Box 7988  
San Francisco, California 94102  
557-5849

**Steve Van Landingham, Program Director**

San Francisco Emergency Food Box  
208 Dolores Street  
San Francisco, California 94103  
621-7575

**Patti Whitney-Wise**

Calif. Rural Legal Assist. Foundation  
2111 Mission Street, Suite 401  
San Francisco, California 94110  
(916) 446-7904

**Claudius "Dusty" Williams**

Director, Food Program  
Glide Memorial Church  
330 Ellis Street  
San Francisco, California 94102  
441-6501

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